

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4859

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 18661

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT

SUBJECT: CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS

REF: ROME 18229

SUMMARY: EMBOFF HAD SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH THREE YOUNG DC PARLIAMENTARIANS WHO ARE AMONG AN INFORMAL GROUP OF DC DEPUTIES WHICH EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE MET WITH COLLECTIVELY ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS OVER THE PAST YEAR. THEY SHARE COMMON VIEWS ON THE NEED FOR THE DC TO REFORM AND REVITALIZE ITSELF WITH NEW FACES AND EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THEIR PARTY'S DIFFICULTY IN CONVINCING THE OLDER PARTY LEADERS TO STEP ASIDE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION. ALL THREE HAD GOOD WORDS TO SAY ABOUT ZACCAGNINI'S AND FORLANI'S COMMITMENT TO THE REJUVENATION OF THE DC AND WERE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR FIRM OPPOSITION TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE AND TO THE PSI EFFORT TO BRING THE PCI INTO THE LEGISLATIVE MAJORITY AS A CONDITION FOR A REVIVED DC-PSI GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIP. END SUMMARY.

MEETING WITH ON. PISANU

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON ON. PISANU, HEAD OF DC PARTY SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI'S SECRETARIAT, AT PARTY HEADQUARTERS. EMBOFF BEGAN THE CONVERSATION BY ASKING HOW ZACCAGNINI' PRESS CONFERENCE WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS HAD GONE EARLIER IN THE

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DAY. PISANU INDICATED THAT ZACCAGNINI SEEMED VERY PLEASED

WITH THE RESULTS AND MADE REFERENCE TO A CALL THAT HE RECEIVED FROM PCI HEADQUARTERS COMPLAINING ABOUT ZACCAGNINI'S STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE. EMBOFF EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT CLEAR STATEMENTS BY THE DC SECRETARY ON THIS ISSUE WERE BENEFICIAL AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE HE AND OTHER DC LEADERS WOULD NOT BE HESITANT TO KEEP CLEAR IN THE PUBLIC'S MIND THE DISTINCTION AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE DC PARTY AND THE IDEOLOGY OF THE PCI. IN RETURNING TO A SUBJECT RAISED AT AN EARLIER MEETING WITH PISANU CONCERNING THE NEED FOR DC LEADERS TO GIVE MORE ATTENTION TO U.S. JOURNALISTS WHO ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY INTERESTED IN ITALY'S POLITICAL SITUATION, PISANU INDICATED THAT LATER THAT DAY ZACCAGNINI WAS GIVING AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW TO SARI GILBERT OF THE WASHINGTON POST IN WHICH HE FELT ZACCAGNINI WOULD DISCUSS HIS OPPOSITION TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE AS WELL AS HIS COMMITMENT TO PARTY REFORM AND REJUVENATION. EMBOFF CONGRATULATED THIS INITIATIVE AND EXPRESSED ENTHUSIASM FOR THE TWO POLICY LINES THAT PISANU EXPRESSED, MAKING CLEAR THAT USG, IN ADDITION TO ITS OPPOSITION TO THE PCI, VERY MUCH FAVORS DC RENEWAL EFFORTS, FEELING THAT THEY ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE DC TO REGAIN POLITICAL INITIATIVE. PISANU WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE SECRETARY'S REMARKS WHICH WERE QUOTED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES ON BOTH THESE POINTS AND SAID THAT SUCH STATEMENTS WERE APPRECIATED AND HELPFUL. HE SAID ANYTHING THAT THE USG CAN DO TO EXPRESS UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHY WITH THE REFORM OBJECTIVES OF THE DC WOULD BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE IN CONTRIBUTING TO BUILDING INTERNATIONAL CREDIBILITY OF A DC PARTY COMMITTED TO SELF-RENEWAL.

2. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION HOW THE PARTY WAS PROCEEDING ON ITS ATTEMPT AT RENEWAL, PISANU ADMITTED THERE EXIST MANY DIFFICULTIES AND OBSTACLES. HE ATTRIBUTED THE RESISTANCE MOSTLY TO RIGHT-WING OPPOSITION INTENT MORE ON KEEPING THE OLD POWER STRUCTURE OF THE PARTY RATHER THAN ACCEPTING NEW MEANS AND APPROACHES FOR PARTY RENEWAL. PISANU FELT THAT AT THE DC NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING, ZACCAGNINI'S CAREFULLY WORDED REPORT, DESIGNED TO ATTRACT MAXIMUM SUPPORT FROM THE VARIOUS SEGMENTS OF THE DC, WAS WELL RECEIVED AND SUCCESSFUL IN NEUTRALIZING STRATEGY OF PICCOLI AND FANFANI WHO WERE EXPECTING A VERY LEFTIST-ORIENTED REPORT FROM ZACCAGNINI. PISANU RECOGNIZED THAT THERE IS STILL STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE ZACCAGNINI LINE BEING LED BY FANFANI

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AND PICCOLI. PISANU INDICATED THAT ZACCAGNINI IS EXPENDING EVERY EFFORT TO GAIN CONSENSUS WITHIN THE PARTY AND TO REOPEN TRADITIONAL DC ORIENTED SEGMENTS OF ITALIAN SOCIETY SUCH AS CISL, ACLI, FUCI, AND COMUNIONE AND LIBERAZIONE. HE INDICATED THERE WERE ENCOURAGING SIGNS THAT ZACCAGNINI'S COMMITMENT TO REFORM AND REVITALIZATION OF THE DC IS PROGRESSIVELY GAINING SUPPORT AND THAT THERE IS A GREATER AWARENESS BY OTHERS IN THE PARTY THAT NEW AND FRESH IMAGES FROM OUTSIDE THE PARTY ARE

NECESSARY IN THE RENEWAL EFFORT. POINTING TO OTHER ENCOURAGING SIGNS, PISANU MENTIONED IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY ARE RECONSIDERING THEIR ANTI-DC POSTURES AND ARE FOLLOWING WITH INTEREST ZACCAGNINI'S EFFORTS TO REFORM THE PARTY. HE CITED IN PARTICULAR THE AGNELLI WHO HAVE SHOWED A MORE POSITIVE STANCE TOWARDS THE DC AND, PARTICULARLY, UMBERTO AGNELLI WHO HAS MADE A BASIC CHANGE IN HIS ANTI-DC ATTITUDES. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IN A PRIOR MEETING WITH PISANU ABOUT THREE MONTHS AGO, HE EXPRESSED HIS DISAPPROVAL OF THE CRITICAL STANCE OF THE AGNELLI TOWARDS THE DC. IT WAS CLEAR HE WAS MAKING A SPECIAL POINT OF LETTING US KNOW THIS CHANGE IN ATTITUDE. OF FURTHER NOTE IN THIS REGARD IS AGNELLI'S STATEMENT TO AMBASSADOR (SEE REFTEL) INCLUDING PISANU AS ONE OF THE EMERGING PROMISING LEADERS. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT ZACCAGNINI HAD RECENTLY MET WITH THE HOLY FATHER WHO HAD SHOWN UNDERSTANDING FOR ZACCAGNINI'S POSITION AND EFFORTS AND ENCOURAGED HIM TO CONTINUE THE DIFFICULT BUT IMPORTANT TASK OF REJUVENATION OF THE DC.

3. CONCERNING THE DC CONGRESS, PISANU INDICATED THAT ZACCAGNINI IS WORKING HARD IN PREPARATION AND THAT HE IS NOT REPEAT NOT COMMITTED TO CONTINUE AS PARTY SECRETARY AND IS WILLING (UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES) TO HAND THE JOB OVER. HE CITED ZACCAGNINI'S INTERVIEW TO APPEAR IN CHRISTMAS ISSUE OF FAMIGLIA CRISTIANA IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT ON MARCH 19 (AFTER THE DC CONGRESS), HE WILL BE "EATING FISH WITH HIS FRIENDS IN RAVENNA, NOT AS PARTY SECRETARY". PISANU WENT ON TO POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT ZACCAGNINI IS NOT WILLING TO HAND OVER THE JOB TO SOMEONE WHO IS NOT COMMITTED TO THE BASIC OVERHAUL AND REFORM OF THE PARTY. HE SAID ZACCAGNINI HAS OBTAINED ENOUGH GRASS ROOTS SUPPORT TO MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR ANY NEW SECRETARY TO SUCCEED HIM WITHOUT ZACCAGNINI'S ENDORSEMENT. PISANU THEN LABELED FORLANI'S BEHAVIOR DURING THE DC NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

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AND AT THE PRESENT TIME AS BEING CORRECT, APPROPRIATE AND BALANCED. HE SAID FORLANI HAS CAREFULLY RESISTED THE EXPLOITATION OF HIS NAME BY THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN USING HIM AGAINST ZACCAGNINI AND HIS POLICY OF REFORM. HE REALIZED THAT FORLANI CANNOT COMPLETELY IDENTIFY WITH THE ZACCAGNINI POSITION AT THIS TIME AND THAT IT WOULD WELL TAKE HIM SOME TIME AND FURTHER STEPS BEFORE HE CAN PRESENT HIMSELF AS A QUOTE CONTINUATORE UNQUOTE OF ZACCAGNINI'S BASIC POLITICAL LINE. HE FELT THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE FOR FORLANI WOULD BE HIS ABILITY TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM FANFANI.

4. IN LOOKING AHEAD TO THE CONGRESS, HE INDICATED THAT HE WOULD HOPE THAT AT THE PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL LEVELS THERE WOULD BE ONLY TWO LISTS OF POTENTIAL DELEGATES TO THE CONGRESS RATHER THAN THE CUSTOMARY SIX OR SEVEN LISTS OF THE PAST. HE FELT IT

ESSENTIAL THAT "CURRENTS" BREAK DOWN SO THAT SOME SEMBLANCE OF PARTY UNITY CAN BE ACHIEVED AND EXPRESSED CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM THAT AT THE CONGRESS THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH SUPPORT TO CHANGE THE OLD AND TIRED IMAGE OF THE DC.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 18661

MEETING WITH ON. SANZA

5. IN A MEETING WITH ON. ANGELO SANZA, REFORM-MINDED LEFT-WING PARLIAMENTARIAN FROM POTENZA, THE HOME BASE OF TREASURY MINISTER COLOMBO, SANZA EXPRESSED THE URGENT NEED FOR THE DC TO PRESENT A NEW IMAGE AT THE DC CONGRESS. SANZA, WHO IS OF THE BASE FACTION REFERRED TO THE BREAK DOWN OF THE "CURRENTS" AS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. HE SAID THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR THE DC TO ACCOMPLISH IS A GENERATIONAL CHANGE. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE STATED THAT ALTHOUGH HE AND OTHER LEFT-DC DEPUTIES ARE MORE COMPATIBLE WITH MORO'S POLITICAL LINE, THEY ARE COMING TO THE REALIZATION THAT THEY WOULD NOT WANT TO SEE MORO RETURN AS PARTY SECRETARY AND WOULD PREFER FORLANI DESPITE HIS CENTRIST POLITICAL POSITION. HE INSISTED THAT THE GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR. THE DC CANNOT GO ON WITH ESTABLISHED LEADERS AND STILL REGAIN CREDIBILITY WITH THE VOTERS. HE INDICATED THAT TRULY REFORM-MINDED ELEMENTS WERE LINING UP WITH ZACCAGNINI AND FORLANI AND IT WAS HIS HOPE THAT THESE TWO FORCES CAN WORK CLOSER TOGETHER SINCE THE OLD GUARD WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT TO UNSEAT. HE REFERRED TO POLITICAL MANEUVERINGS BY COLOMBO IN

POTENZA TO UNSEAT SOME DELEGATES PLEDGED TO A MORE REFORMIST LINE AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE RESISTANCE OF THE "CAPI STORICI". HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT ZACCAGNINI WOULD RESOLVE THE QUESTION IN FAVOR OF THE REFORMISTS.

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6. SANZA ALSO INDICATED THAT ALL ELEMENTS OF THE DC, INCLUDING

IT MOST LEFT-WING FACTIONS, ARE FIRM IN THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE AND ALSO TO THE SOCIALIST ATTEMPT TO ASSOCIATE THE PCI WITH THE GOVERNMENT MAJORITY.

MEETING WITH ON. SABBATINI

7. IN A MEETING WITH ON. GIANFRANCO SABBATINI, A CLOST ASSOCIATE OF DEFENSE MINISTER FORLANI, SABBATINI REITERATED MANY OF THE POINTS RAISED ABOVE REGARDING DC OPPOSITION TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE, TO THE PSI PROPOSAL FOR PCI LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT, AND SUPPORT FOR THE DC REFORM AND REJUVENATION. HE INDICATED THAT FORLANI WAS FULLY DEDICATED TO THE REVITALIZATION OF THE DC BUT THAT POLITICAL NECESSITY REQUIRED HIM TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY AT THIS TIME. HE INDICATED THAT FORLANI HAS APPRECIATION FOR ZACCAGNINI'S PERFORMANCE AS PARTY SECRETARY AND THAT HE FEELS ZACCAGNINI IS DOING A GOOD JOB IN MOVING THE PARTY ON THE WAY TO REFORM. IN EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR FORLANI'S CAUTION REGARDING THE OLD GUARD, SABBATINI RAISED THE FACT THAT FORLANI WAS MADE A POLITICAL SCAPEGOAT IN 1973 WHEN HE WAS DROPPED AS PARTY SECRETARY. HE INDICATED THAT AT THAT TIME FORLANI WANTED TO BRING ABOUT BASIC REFORM OF THE PARTY AND WAS RESISTED BY THE ESTABLISHED LEADERS AND PUT OUT TO PASTURE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE OLD GUARD STILL MAINTAINS GREAT POWER AND KNOWS HOW TO USE IT RUTHLESSLY AND THAT FORLANI VERY MUCH WANTED TO KEEP BROADENING THE BASE OF HIS SUPPORT AND COULD NOT ENVISION HIM MAKING ANY PREMATURE CHALLENGE OF ZACCAGNINI BEFORE THE CONGRESS.

8. SABBATINI EVIDENCED GREAT INTEREST IN THE DE MARTINO VISIT AND RECOGNIZED ITS POLITICAL IMPORTANCE. THE PSI IS AN "EXASPERATING" BUT "ESSENTIAL" PARTY AND HE HOPED WE WOULD CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE IN A POSITIVE WAY THE ATTITUDES OF THE PSI.VOLPE

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